

LEGISLATURE

University Of Wyoming Asks Church Elder To Change Sign Calling LGBTQ Student A Male

A University of Wyoming staffer on Friday asked a Laramie church elder to remove an LGBTQ student's name from a sign proclaiming that, "God created male and female and (redacted) is a male."

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A church elder attending an event at the University of Wyoming displayed a sign Friday that read, "God created male and female and (redacted) is a male," but a UW staffer immediately asked the elder to change the sign, the college announced Monday.

EXHIBIT O

The individual named on the sign is a UW student and a member of the LGBTQ+ community, the University said.

'To Tell The Truth'

Todd Schmidt, an elder of the Laramie Faith Community Church, told the Branding Iron that he displayed the sign Friday "to tell the truth and bring people to God."

Schmidt was asked to remove the student's name from the sign and he complied, the University reported in a public letter from UW President Ed Seidel and Kim Chestnut, vice president for Student Affairs and interim vice president for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

UW communications director Chad Baldwin confirmed to Cowboy State Daily that a UW staffer, not a student or passerby, had made the request for a sign change.

Freedom Of Speech

Schmidt stuck around with what remained of his sign and debated passersby, the letter adds.

"While (Schmidt) engaged in heated exchanges with students and perhaps others throughout the afternoon, these interactions were not in obvious violation of UW policies," the letter reads.

Schmidt told the Branding Iron that he believes he is spreading the word of God and helping those whose lives contradict it. He said he understood why he was asked to take down part of the sign, but also believes the request goes against his freedom of speech, the Branding Iron reported.

Schmidt did not immediately return a Cowboy State Daily message and voicemail requesting comment.

Into A Conversation

UW leadership said its efforts in the matter are geared toward honoring "a wide variety of perspectives in our community AND (engaging one another) regarding those different perspectives with respect and integrity."

"As a reflection," the UW letter continues, "an approach of respect and integrity is about calling people into a conversation as opposed to calling people out."



Other Incidents

The incident comes weeks after the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority on UW campus inducted its first openly transgender member.

The university said Schmidt's incident followed two reportedly "unrelated" incidents Wednesday and Thursday evenings on campus. In those events, LGBTQ+ community members at UW observed "disruptive behavior from a small group of students at two separate campus events," reads the letter.

The letter says Schmidt's and the two earlier incidents are under investigation.

"If any further violations are determined to have taken place, we will take appropriate actions," it adds. "We only get to coexist civilly if we treat one another with care."

UW encouraged those who were "negatively impacted by the incidents" to contact the office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion or visit the Rainbow Resource Center for support and materials.